

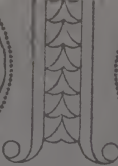
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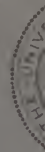
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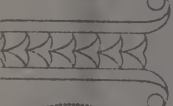
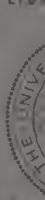
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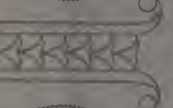
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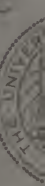
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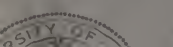
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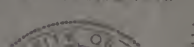
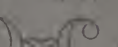
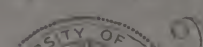
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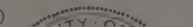


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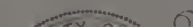


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THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS OF
ÆSCHYLUS



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THE
SUPPLIANT MAIDENS
OF ÆSCHYLUS

WARD D. ANTONY MORSHEAD, MASTER OF ARTS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY
E. D. A. MORSHEAD, M.A.

ASSISTANT-MASTER OF WINCHESTER COLLEGE
LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD



"But lend me the psalterion! nay, for once—
Once let my hand fall where the other's lay!
Aristophanes' Apology.

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1883

24277

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PA
3825
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1883
MAIN

DEDICATION.

TAKE thou this gift from out the grave of Time.
The urns of Greece lie shattered, and the cup
That for Athenian lips the Muses filled,
And flowery crowns that on Athenian hair
Hid the cicala, freedom's golden sign,
Dust in the dust have fallen. Calmly sad,
The marble dead upon Athenian tombs
Speak from their eyes "Farewell : " and well have fared
They and the saddened friends, whose hands last clasp
Wins from the solemn stone eternity.
Yea, well they fared unto the evening god,
Passing beyond the limit of the world,
Where face to face the son his mother saw,
A living man a shadow, while she spake
Words that Odysseus and that Homer heard,—
*I too, O child, I reached the common doom,
The grave, the goal of fate, and passed away.*
—Such, Anticleia, as thy voice to him,
Across the dim gray gulf of death and time
Is that of Greece, a mother's to a child,—
Mother of each whose dreams are grave and fair—
Who sees the Naiad where the streams are bright,
And in the sunny ripple of the sea
'Cymodoce with floating golden hair :

And in the whisper of the waving oak
Hears still the Dryad's plaint, and, in the wind
That sighs through moonlit woodlands, knows the horn
Of Artemis, and silver shafts and bow.
Therefore if still around this broken vase,
Borne by rough hands, unworthy of their load,
Far from Cephisus and the wandering rills,
There cling a fragrance as of things once sweet,
Of honey from Hymettus' desert hill,
Take thou the gift and hold it close and dear ;
For gifts that die have living memories—
Voices of unreturning days, that breathe
The spirit of a day that never dies.

ARGUMENT.

Io, the daughter of Inachus, King of Argos, was beloved of Zeus. But Hera was jealous of that love, and by her ill will was Io given over to frenzy, and her body took the semblance of a heifer : and Argus, a many-eyed herdsman, was set by Hera to watch Io whithersoever she strayed. Yet, in despite of Argus, did Zeus draw nigh unto her in the shape of a bull. And by the will of Zeus and the craft of Hermes was Argus slain. Then Io was driven over far lands and seas by her madness, and came at length to the land of Egypt. There was she restored to herself by a touch of the hand of Zeus, and bare a child called Epaphus. And from Epaphus sprang Libya, and from Libya, Belus ; and from Belus, Ægyptus and Danaus. And the sons of Ægyptus willed to take the daughters of Danaus in marriage. But the maidens held such wedlock in horror, and fled with their father over sea to Argos ; and the king and citizens of Argos gave them shelter and protection from their pursuers.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



DANAUS.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

*Chorus of the Daughters of Danaus.
Attendants.*

*Scene:—A sacred precinct near the gates of Argos: statues and shrines
of Zeus and other deities stand around.*



THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS.

—◆—
CHORUS.

ZEUS! Lord and guard of suppliant hands!
Look down benign on us who crave
Thine aid—whom winds and waters drove
From where, through drifting shifting sands,
Pours Nilus to the wave.

From where the green land, god-possessed,
Closes and fronts the Syrian waste,
We flee as exiles, yet unbanned
By murder's sentence from our land;
But—since Ægyptus had decreed
His sons should wed his brother's seed,—
Ourselves we tore from bonds abhorred
From wedlock not of heart but hand,
Nor brooked to call a kinsman lord!

And Danaus, our sire and guide,
The king of counsel, pond'ring well
The dice of fortune as they fell,
Out of two griefs the kindlier chose,
And bade us fly, with him beside,

Heedless what winds or waves arose,
 And o'er the wide sea waters haste,
 Until to Argos' shore at last

Our wandering pinnacle came—
 Argos, the immemorial home
 Of her from whom we boast to come—
 Io, the ox-horned maiden, whom,
 After long wandering, woe, and scathe,
 Zeus with a touch, a mystic breath,
 Made mother of our name.

30 Therefore, of all the lands of earth,
 On this most gladly step we forth,
 And in our hands aloft we bear—
 Sole weapon for a suppliant's wear—
 The olive-shoot, with wool enwound !

City, and land, and waters wan
 Of Inachus, and Gods most high,
 And ye who, deep beneath the ground,
 Bring vengeance weird on mortal man,
 Powers of the grave, on you we cry !

40 And unto Zeus the Saviour, guard
 Of mortals holy and unstained.

Receive ye us—keep watch and ward
 Above the suppliant maiden band !
 Chaste be the heart of this your land
 Towards the weak ! but, ere the throng,
 The wanton swarm, from Egypt sprung,
 Leap forth upon the silted shore,
 Thrust back their swift-rowed bark again,
 Repel them, urge them to the main !

50 And there, 'mid storm and lightning's shine,
 And scudding drift and thunder's roar,
 Deep death be theirs, in stormy brine!
 Before they foully grasp and win
 Us, maiden-children of their kin,
 And climb the couch by law denied,
 And wrong each weak reluctant bride.

X And now on her I call,
 Mine ancestress, who far on Egypt's shore
 A heifer's semblance wore,—
 60 A maiden once, by Hera's malice changed!
 And then on him withal,
 Who, as amid the flowers the grazing heifer ranged,
 Was in her by a breath of Zeus conceived;
 And, as the hour of birth drew nigh,
 By fate fulfilled, unto the light he came;—
 And Epaphus for name,
 Born from the touch of Zeus, the child received. X

On him, on him I cry,
 And him for patron hold—
 70 While in this grassy vale I stand,
 Where Io roamed of old!
 And here, recounting all her toil and pain,
 Signs will I show to those who rule the land
 That I am child of hers; and all shall understand,
 Hearing the doubtful tale of the dim past made plain.

OK And, ere the end shall be,
 Each man the truth of what I tell shall see.
 And if there dwell hard by.

strong

One skilled to read from bird-notes augury,
 80 That man, when through his ears shall thrill our tearful wail,
 Shall deem he hears the voice, the plaintive tale
 Of her, the piteous spouse of Tereus, lord of guile—
 Whom the hawk harries yet, the mourning nightingale. X
 She, from her happy home and fair streams scared away,
 Wails wild and sad for haunts beloved erewhile.
 Yea, and for Itylus—ah, well-a-day! *Woe stay low*
 Slain by her own, his mother's hand,
 Maddened by lustful wrong, the deed by Tereus planned!
 Like her I wail and wail, in soft Ionian tones,
 90 And as she wastes, even so
 Wastes my soft cheek, once ripe with Nilus' suns,
 And all my heart dissolves in utter woe.
 Sad flowers of grief I cull,
 Fleeing from kinsmen's love unmerciful—
 Yea, from the clutching hands, the lustful crowd,
 I sped across the waves, from Egypt's land of cloud.*
ancient cradle
 Gods of the birthplace of my race,
 Hear me, just gods! With righteous grace
 On me, on me look down!
 100 Grant not to youth its heart's unchaste desire,
 But, swiftly spurning Lust's unholy fire,
 Bless only love and willing wedlock's crown!

* “*ἀεπίας ἀπὸ γᾶς.*” This epithet may appear strange to modern readers, accustomed to think of Egypt as a land of cloudless skies and pellucid atmosphere. Nevertheless, both Pindar (Pyth. iv. 93), and Apollonius Rhodius (iv. 267) speak of it in the same way as Æschylus. It has been conjectured that they allude to the fog-banks that often obscure the low coasts—a phenomenon likely to impress the early navigators, and to be reported by them.

The war-worn fliers from the battle's wrack
Find refuge at the hallowed altar-side,

The sanctuary divine,—

Ye gods! such refuge unto me provide—

Such sanctuary be mine!

Though the deep will of Zeus be hard to track,

Yet doth it flame and glance,

A beacon in the dark, 'mid clouds of chance

That wrap mankind.

Yea, though the counsel fall, undone it shall not lie,

Whate'er be shaped and fixed within Zeus' ruling mind—

Dark as a solemn grove, with sombre leafage shaded,

His paths of purpose wind,

A marvel to man's eye.

Smitten by him, from towering hopes degraded,

Mortals lie low and still :

Tireless and effortless, works forth its will

The arm divine!

God from his holy seat, in calm of unarmed power,

Brings forth the deed, at its appointed hour!

Let him look down on mortal wantonness!

Lo! how the youthful stock of Belus' line

Craves for me, uncontrolled—

With just and madness bold—

Urged on by passion's shunless stress—

And, cheated, learns too late the prey has 'scaped their
hold!

Ah, listen, listen to my grievous tale,
130 My sorrow's words, my shrill and tearful cries!

Ah woe, ah woe!

Loud with lament the accents rise,
And from my living lips my own sad dirges flow!

O Apian land of hill and dale,
Thou kennest yet, O land, this faltered foreign wail—

Have mercy, hear my prayer!

Lo, how again, again, I rend and tear
My woven raiment, and from off my hair
Cast the Sidonian veil!

140 Ah, but if fortune smile, if death be driven away,
Vowed rites, with eager haste, we to the gods will pay!

Alas, alas again!

O whither drift the waves? and who shall loose the pain?

O Apian land of hill and dale,
Thou kennest yet, O land, this faltered foreign wail!

Have mercy, hear my prayer!

Lo, how again, again, I rend and tear
My woven raiment, and from off my hair
Cast the Sidonian veil!

150 The wafting oar, the bark with woven sail,
From which the sea foamed back,
Sped me, unharmed of storms, along the breeze's track—

Be it unblamed of me!

But ah, the end, the end of my emprise!
May He, the Father, with all-seeing eyes,

Grant me that end to see !

Grant that henceforth unstained as heretofore

I may escape the forced embrace

Of those proud children of the race

That sacred Io bore.

And thou, O maiden-goddess chaste and pure—

Queen of the inner fane,—

Look of thy grace on me, O Artemis,

Thy willing suppliant—thine, thine it is,

Who from the lustful onslaught fled secure,

To grant that I too without stain

The shelter of thy purity may gain !

Grant that henceforth unstained as heretofore

I may escape the forced embrace

Of those proud children of the race

That sacred Io bore !

Yet if this may not be,

We, the dark race sun-smitten, we

Will speed with suppliant wands

To Zeus who rules below, with hospitable hands

Who welcomes all the dead from all the lands :

Yea, by our own hands strangled, we will go,

Spurned by Olympian gods, unto the gods below !

Zeus, hear and save !

The searching, poisonous hate, that Io vexed and drove,

Was of a goddess : well I know
 The bitter ire, the wrathful woe
 Of Hera, queen of heaven—
 A storm, a storm her breath, whereby we yet are driven !
 Bethink thee, what dispraise
 Of Zeus himself mankind will raise,
 If now he turn his face averted from our cries !
 If now, dishonoured and alone,
 The ox-horned maiden's race shall be undone,
 190 Children of Epaphus, his own begotten son—
 Zeus, listen from on high—to thee our prayers arise.

 Zeus, hear and save !
 The searching poisonous hate that Io vexed and drave,
 Was of a goddess : well I know
 The bitter ire, the wrathful woe
 Of Hera, queen of heaven—
 A storm, a storm her breath, whereby we yet are driven !

DANAUS.

Children, be wary—wary he with whom
 Ye come, your trusty sire and steersman old :
 200 And that same caution hold I here on land,
 And bid you hoard my words, inscribing them
 On memory's tablets. Lo, I see afar
 Dust, voiceless herald of a host, arise ;
 And hark, within their griding sockets ring
 Axles of hurrying wheels ! I see approach,
 Borne in curved cars, by speeding horses drawn,
 A speared and shielded band. The chiefs, perchance,



Of this their land are hitherward intent
 To look on us, of whom they yet have heard
 210 By messengers alone. But come who may,
 And come he peaceful or in ravening wrath
 Spurred on his path, 'twere best, in any case,
 Damsels, to cling unto this altar-mound
 Made sacred to their gods of festival,—
 A shrine is stronger than a tower to save,
 A shield that none may cleave. Step swift thereto,
 And in your left hands hold with reverence
 The white-crowned wands of supplicance, the sign
 Beloved of Zeus, compassion's lord, and speak
 220 To those that question you, words meek and low
 And piteous, as beseems your stranger state,
 Clearly avowing of this flight of yours
 The bloodless cause ; and on your utterance
 See to it well that modesty attend ;
 From downcast eyes, from brows of pure control,
 Let chastity look forth ; nor, when ye speak,
 Be voluble nor eager—they that dwell
 Within this land are sternly swift to chide.
 And be your words submissive : heed this well ;
 230 For weak ye are, outcasts on stranger lands,
 And froward talk beseems not strengthless hands.

Leader
 CHORUS.

X
 O father, warily to us aware
 Thy words are spoken, and thy wisdom's hest
 My mind shall hoard, with Zeus our sire to aid.

DANAUS.

Even so—with gracious aspect let him aid

Leader
CHORUS.

Fain were I now to seat me by thy side.

DANAUS.

Now dally not, but put our thought in act.

all *Leader*
CHORUS.

Zeus, pity our distress, or e'er we die.

DANAUS.

If so he will, your toils to joy will turn.

Leader
CHORUS.

240 Lo, on this shrine, the semblance of a bird.*

DANAUS.

Zeus' bird of dawn it is; invoke the sign

Leader
CHORUS.

Thus I invoke the saving rays of morn.

DANAUS.

Next, bright Apollo, exiled once from heaven.

* The whole of this dialogue in alternate verses is disarranged in the MSS. The re-arrangement which has approved itself to Paley has been here followed. It involves, however, a hiatus, instead of the line to which this note is appended. The substance of the lost line being easily deducible from the context, it has been supplied in the translation.

Leader

CHORUS.

The exiled god will pity our exile.

DANAUS.

Yea, may he pity, giving grace and aid.

Leader

CHORUS.

Whom next invoke I, of these other gods?

DANAUS.

Lo, here a trident, symbol of a god.

Leader

CHORUS.

Who * gave sea-safety; may he bless on land!

DANAUS.

This next is Hermes, carved in Grecian wise.

Leader

CHORUS.

250 Then let him herald help to freedom won.

DANAUS.

Lastly, adore this altar consecrate
To many lesser gods in one; then crouch
On holy ground, a flock of doves that flee,
Scared by no alien hawks, a kin not kind,
Hateful, and fain of love more hateful still.

* Poseidon.

Foul is the bird that rends another bird,
 And foul the men who hale unwilling maids,
 From sire unwilling, to the bridal bed.
 Never on earth, nor in the lower world,
 260 Shall lewdness such as theirs escape the ban :
 There too, if men say right, a God there is
 Who upon dead men turns their sin to doom,
 To final doom. Take heed, draw hitherward,
 That from this hap your safety ye may win.

[Enter the KING OF ARGOS.]

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Speak—of what land are ye? No Grecian band
 Is this to whom I speak, with Eastern robes
 And wrappings richly dight : no Argive maid,
 No woman in all Greece such garb doth wear.
 This too gives marvel, how unto this land,
 270 Unheralded, unfriended, without guide,
 And without fear, ye came? yet wands I see,
 True sign of suppliance, by you laid down
 On shrines of these our gods of festival.
 No land but Greece can rede such signs aright.
 Much else there is, conjecture well might guess,
 But let words teach the man who stands to hear.

Leader
 CHORUS.

True is the word thou spakest of my garb ;
 But speak I unto thee as citizen,
 Or Hermes' wandbearer, or chieftain king?

THE KING OF ARGOS.

280 For that, take heart and answer without fear.
I am Pelasgus, ruler of this land,
Child of Palaichthon, whom the earth brought forth ;
And rightly named from me, the race who reap
This country's harvests are Pelasgian called.
And o'er the wide and westward-stretching land,
Where through the lucent wave of Strymon flows,
I rule ; Perrhæbia's land my boundary is
Northward, and Pindus' further slopes, that watch
Pæonia, and Dodona's mountain ridge.
390 West, east, the limit of the washing seas
Restrains my rule—the interspace is mine.
But this whereon we stand is Apian land,
Styled so of old from the great healer's name ;
For Apis, coming from Naupactus' shore
Beyond the strait, child of Apollo's self
And like him seer and healer, cleansed this land
From man-devouring monsters, whom the earth,
Stained with pollution of old bloodshedding,
Brought forth in malice, beasts of ravening jaws,
300 A grisly throng of serpents manifold.
And healings of their hurt, by knife and charm,
Apis devised, unblamed of Argive men,
And in their prayers found honour, for reward.
—Lo, thou hast heard the tokens that I give :
Speak forth thy race, and tell a forthright tale ;
In sooth, this people loves not many words.

CHORUS.

Short is my word and clear. Of Argive race
 We come, from her the ox-horned maiden who
 Erst bare the sacred child. My word shall give
 310 Whate'er can stablish this my soothfast tale.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

O stranger maids, I may not trust this word,
 That ye have share in this our Argive race.
 No likeness of our country do ye bear,
 But semblance as of Libyan womankind.
 Even such a stock by Nilus' banks might grow ;
 And like to you the moulds, the handicraft
 Of men, made like unto a woman's shape
 In Cyprus born. Of roving Indian maids
 Whose camping-grounds by Æthiopia lie,
 320 And camels burdened even as mules, and bearing
 Riders, as horses bear, mine ears have heard ;
 And tales of flesh-devouring mateless maids
 Called Amazons : to these, if bows ye bare,
 I most had deemed you like. Speak further yet,
 That of your Argive birth the truth I learn.

CHORUS.

36 Here in this Argive land—so runs the tale—
 37 Io was priestess once of Hera's fane.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Yea, truth it is, and far this word prevails :
 Is't said that Zeus with mortal mingled love ?

CHORUS.

330 Ay, and that Hera that embrace surmised.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

How issued then this strife of those on high?

CHORUS

By Hera's will, a heifer she became.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Held Zeus aloof then from the hornèd beast?

CHORUS.

Tis said, he loved, in semblance of a bull

THE KING OF ARGOS.

And his stern consort, did she aught thereon?

CHORUS.

One myriad-eyed she set, the heifer's guard.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

How namest thou this herdsman many-eyed?

CHORUS.

Argus, the child of Earth, whom Hermes slew.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Still did the goddess vex the beast ill-starred?

CHORUS.

3 40 She wrought a gadfly with a goading sting.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Thus drave she Io hence, to roam afar?

CHORUS.

Yea—this thy word coheres exact with mine.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Then to Canopus and to Memphis came she?

CHORUS.

And by Zeus' hand was touched, and bare a child.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Who vaunts him the Zeus-mated heifer's son?

CHORUS.

Epaphus, named rightly from the saving touch.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

And whom in turn did Epaphus beget? *

CHORUS.

Libya, with name of a wide land endowed.

* Here one verse at least has been lost. The conjecture of Bothe seems to be verified, as far as substance is concerned, by the next line, and has consequently been adopted.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

And who from her was born unto the race ?

CHORUS.

350 Belus : from him two sons, my father one.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Speak now to me his name, this greybeard wise.

CHORUS.

Danaus ; his brother fifty sons begat.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Grudge not, in telling, his name too to tell.

CHORUS.

Ægyptus : thou my lineage old hast heard—
Strive then to aid a kindred Argive band.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Yea of a truth, in backward scope of time,
Of Argive race ye seem : but say what chance
Fell on you, goading you from home and land ?

CHORUS.

360 Lord of Pelasgian men, calamity
Is manifold and diverse ; as of birds
Feather from feather differs, so of men
The woes are sundry. Who had dared foretell
This sudden flight, this thrill of hate and fear

Of loathly wedlock, would on Argos' shore
Set forth a race of kindred lineage?

THE KING OF ARGOS.

But say, what cravest thou, with olive-shoots
New-plucked, white-filleted, upon our shrines?

CHORUS.

Ne'er to be slaves unto Ægyptus' race.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Doth your own hate, or doth the law forbid?

CHORUS.

310 Not as our lords, but as unloved, we chide them.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

'Tis from such wedlock that advancement comes.

CHORUS.

How easy is it, from the weak to turn!

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Say then, what Heaven commands me toward you.

CHORUS.

Deny us, though Ægyptus' race demand.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

A heavy task thou namest, a rash war.

CHORUS.

But Justice champions them who strike for her.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Yea, if their side was from the outset hers.

CHORUS.

Revere the gods thus crowned, who steer the State.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Awe thrills me, seeing these shrines with leafage crowned.

CHORUS.

380 Yea, stern the wrath of Zeus, the suppliants' lord.

Child of Palaichthon, royal chief

Of thy Pelasgians, hear!

Bow down thine heart to my relief—

A fugitive, a suppliant, swift with fear,

390 A heifer whom the wild wolves chase
creature

O'er toppling crags; in piteous case

Aloud, afar she lows,

Calling the herdsman's trusty arm to save her from her foes!

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Lo, with bound heads beside our city shrines

Ye sit 'neath shade of new-plucked olive-boughs.

Our distant kin's resentment Heaven forefend.

Let not this hap, unhop'd and unforeseen,

Bring war on us: for strife we covet not.

CHORUS.

Justice, the daughter of right-dealing Zeus,
 Justice, the queen of suppliants, look down,
 That this our plight no ill may loose
 Upon your town.

This word, even from the young, let age and wisdom learn :
 If thou to suppliants show grace,
 450 Thou shalt not lack Heaven's grace in turn,
 So long as virtue's gifts on heavenly shrines have place.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

'Tis not my hearth where ye sit suppliant ;
 And if the city bear a common stain,
 Be it the common toil to cleanse the same :
 Therefore no pledge, no promise will I give,
 Ere counsel with the commonwealth be held.

CHORUS.

Nay, but the source of sway, the city's self, art thou,
 A power unjudged ! thine, only thine,
 To rule the right of hearth and shrine !
 410 Before thy throne and sceptre all men bow !
 Above all causes lord—beware the curse divine !

THE KING OF ARGOS.

May that curse fall upon mine enemies !
 I cannot aid you without risk of scathe,
 Nor scorn your prayers—unmerciful it were.
 Perplexed, distraught I stand, and fear alike
 The twofold chance, to do or not to do.

CHORUS.

Have heed of him who looketh from on high,
The guard of woeful mortals, whosoe'er
Unto their fellows cry,
And find no pity, find no justice there.

Abiding in his wrath, the suppliants' lord
Doth smite, unmoved by cries, unbent by prayerful word.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

But if Ægyptus' children grasp you here,
Claiming, their country's right, to hold you theirs
As next of kin, who dares to counter this?
Plead ye your country's laws, if plead ye may,
That upon you they lay no lawful hand.

CHORUS.

Let me not fall, O nevermore,
A prey into the young men's hand;
Rather than wed whom I abhor,
By pilot-stars I flee this land;
O king, take justice to thy side,
And with the righteous powers decide!

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Hard is the cause—make me not judge thereof.
Already I have vowed it, to do nought
Save after counsel with my people ta'en,
King though I be; that ne'er in after time,
If ill fate chance, my people then may say—
In aid of strangers thou the state hast slain.

CHORUS.

Zeus, lord of kinship, rules at will
 The swaying balance, and surveys
 Evil and good ; to men of ill
 Gives evil, and to good men praise.
 And thou—since true those scales do sway—
 Shalt thou from justice shrink away ?

THE KING OF ARGOS.

A deep, a saving counsel here there needs—
 An eye that like a diver to the depth
 Of dark perplexity can pass and see,
 Undizzied, unconfused. First must we care
 That to the State and to ourselves this thing
 Shall bring no ruin ; next, that wrangling hands
 Shall grasp you not as prey, nor we ourselves
 Betray you thus embracing sacred shrines,
 And make the avenging all-destroying god,
 Who even in hell doth wreak him on the dead,
 A grievous inmate, an abiding bane.
 —Spake I aright, of saving counsel's need ?

CHORUS.

Yea, counsel take and stand to aid
 At Justice' side and mine.
 Betray not me, the timorous maid
 Whom far beyond the brine
 A godless violence cast forth forlorn.
 O King, wilt thou behold—

traces 4

H

Ruth

Lord of this land, wilt thou behold me torn
 From altars manifold?
 Bethink thee of the young men's wrath and lust,
 Hold off their evil pride;
 Steel not thyself to see the suppliant thrust
 From holy statue's side,
 Haled by the frontlet on my forehead bound
 As steeds are led, ~~and~~ drawn
 By hands that drag from shrine and altar-mound
 My vesture's fringed lawn.
 Know thou that whether for Ægyptus' race
 Thou dost their wish fulfil,
 Or for the gods and for each holy place—
 Be thy choice good or ill,
 Blow is with blow requited, grace with grace.
 Such is Zeus' righteous will.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Yea, I have pondered : from the sea of doubt
 Here drives at length the bark of thought ashore ;
 Landward with screw and windlass haled, and firm,
 Clamped to her props, she lies. The need is stern ;
 With men or gods a mighty strife we strive
 Perforce, and either hap in grief concludes.
 For, if a house be sacked, new wealth for old
 Not hard it is to win—so Zeus the lord
 Of treasure favour—more than quits the loss,
 Enough to pile the store of wealth full high ;
 Or if a tongue shoot forth untimely speech,
 Bitter and strong to goad a man to wrath,

Soft words there be to soothe that wrath away :
 But what device shall make the war of kin
 Bloodless ? that woe, the blood of many beasts,
 And victims manifold to many gods,
 Alone can cure. Right glad I were to shun
 This strife, and am more fain of ignorance
 Than of the wisdom of a woe endured.
 The gods send better than my soul foretells !

Leader
 CHORUS.

Of many cries for mercy, hear the end.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Say on, then, for it shall not scape mine ear.

CHORUS.

Girdles we have, and bands that bind our robes.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Even so ; such things beseem a woman's wear.

CHORUS.

Know, then, with these a fair device there is——

THE KING OF ARGOS.

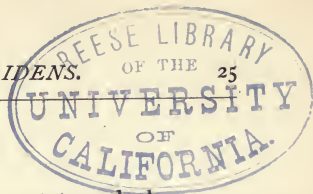
Speak, then : what utterance doth this foretell ?

CHORUS.

Unless to us thou givest pledge secure——

THE KING OF ARGOS.

What can thy girdles' craft achieve for thee ?



CHORUS.

Strange votive tablets shall these statues deck.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Mysterious thy resolve—avow it clear.

CHORUS.

Swiftly to hang me on these sculptured gods !

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Thy word is as a lash to urge my heart.

CHORUS.

Thou seest truth, for I have cleared thine eyes.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Yea, and woes manifold, invincible,
A crowd of ills, sweep on me torrent-like.
My bark goes forth upon a sea of troubles
Unfathomed, ill to traverse, harbourless.
For if my deed shall match not your demand,
Dire, beyond shot of speech, shall be the bane
Your death's pollution leaves unto this land.
Yet if against your kin, Ægyptus' race,
Before our gates I front the doom of war,
Will not the city's loss be sore? Shall men
For women's sake incarnadine the ground?
But yet the wrath of Zeus, the suppliants' lord,
I needs must fear : most awful unto man
The terror of his anger. Thou, old man,

The father of these maidens, gather up
 Within your arms these wands of suppliance,
 And lay them at the altars manifold
 Of all our country's gods, that all the town
 Know, by this sign, your coming hitherward.
 Nor, in thy haste, do thou say aught of me.
 Swift is this folk to censure those who rule ;
 But, if they see these signs of suppliance,
 It well may chance that each will pity you,
 And loathe the young men's violent pursuit ;
 And thus a fairer favour you may find :
 For, to the helpless, each man's heart is kind.

DANAUS.

To us Beyond gifts manifold to us is this,
 To find a champion thus compassionate ;
 Yet send with me attendants, of thy folk,
 Rightly to guide me, that I duly find
 Each altar of your city's gods that stands
 Before the fane, each dedicated shrine ;
 And that in safety through the city's ways
 I may pass onwards : all unlike to yours
 The outward semblance that I wear—the race
 That Nilus rears is all dissimilar
 To that of Inachus. Keep watch and ward
 Lest heedlessness bring death : full oft, I ween,
 Friend hath slain friend, not knowing whom he slew.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Go at his side, attendants,—he saith well.
 On to the city's consecrated shrines ;

Nor be of many words to those ye meet,
The while this suppliant voyager ye lead.

[*Exit DANAUS with attendants.*]

CHORUS.

Let him go forward, thy command obeying.
But me how biddest, how assurest thou ?

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Leave there the new-plucked boughs, thy sorrow's sign.

CHORUS.

Thus beckoned forth, at thy behest I leave them.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Now to this level precinct turn thyself.

CHORUS.

Unconsecrate it is, and cannot shield me.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

We will not yield thee to those falcons' greed.

CHORUS.

What help? more fierce they are than serpents fell.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

We spake thee fair—speak thou them fair in turn.

CHORUS.

What marvel that we loathe them, scared in soul?

THE KING OF ARGOS.

But terror never can become a king.

CHORUS.

Thus speak, thus act, and reassure my mind.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Not long thy sire shall leave thee desolate.
 But I will call the country's indwellers,
 And with soft words th' assembly will persuade,
 And warn your sire what pleadings will avail.
 Therefore abide ye, and with prayer entreat
 The country's gods to compass your desire ;
 The while I go, this matter to provide,
 Persuasion and fair fortune at my side.

[Exit the KING OF ARGOS.]

CHORUS.

O King of Kings, among the blest

Thou highest and thou happiest,

Listen and grant our prayer,

And, deeply loathing, thrust

Away from us the young men's lust,

And deeply drown

In azure waters, down and ever down,

Benches and rowers dark,

The fatal and perfidious bark !

Unto the maidens turn thy gracious care ;

Think yet again upon the tale of fame,

Stephen unit

Buck

Ruth

How from the maiden loved of thee there sprung
 Mine ancient line, long since in many a legend sung !
 — Remember, O remember, thou whose hand
 Did Io by a touch to human shape reclaim.

For from this Argos erst our mother came

And then in Egypt's land, and hence
 The god-possess, we dwelt, and thence our birth we claim.

And now have I roamed back
 Unto the ancient track

Where Io roamed and pastured among flowers,
 Watched o'er by Argus' eyes,
 Through the lush grasses and the meadow bowers.

Thence, by the gadfly maddened, forth she flies
 Unto far lands and alien peoples driven :
 And, following fate, through paths of foam and surge,
 Sees, as she goes, the cleaving strait divide

Greece, from the Eastland riven.

And swift through Asian borders doth she urge
 Her course, o'er Phrygian mountains' sheep-clipt side ;
 Thence, where the Mysian realm of Teuthras lies,

Towards Lydian lowlands hies,
 And o'er Cilician and Pamphylian hills
 And ever-flowing rills,

And thence to Aphrodite's fertile shore,*
 The land of garnered wheat and wealthy store.

And thence, deep-stung by wild unrest,
 By the winged fly that goaded her and drove,
 Unto the fertile land, the god-possess,

* Cyprus.

*Aloha KANAKA = hello, native
 goodbye*

(Where, fed from far-off snows,
 Life-giving Nilus flows,
 Urged on by Typho's strength, a fertilizing wave),
 She roves, in harassed and dishonoured flight,
 Scathed by the blasting pangs of Hera's dread despite.
 And they within the land
 With terror shook and wanned,
 So strange the sight they saw, and were afraid—
 A wild twy-natured thing, half heifer and half maid.

Whose hand was laid at last on Io, thus forlorn,
 With many roamings worn?

Who bade the harassed maiden's peace return?

Zeus, lord of time eterne.

Yea, by his breath divine, by his unscathing strength,
 She lays aside her bane,

And softened back to womanhood at length
 Sheds human tears again.

Then quickened with Zeus' veritable seed,
 A progeny she bare,
 A stainless babe, a child of heavenly breed,
 Of life and fortune fair.

His is the life of life—so all men say,—

His is the seed of Zeus.

*Who else had power stern Hera's craft to stay,
 Her vengeful curse to loose?*

Yea, all from Zeus befel
 And rightly wouldst thou tell
 That we from Epaphus, his child, were born :

Justly his deed was done,
 Unto what other one,
 Of all the gods, should I for justice turn ?
 From him our race did spring ;
 Creator he and King,
 Ancient of days and wisdom he, and might.
 As bark before the wind,
 So, wafted by his mind,
 Moves every counsel, each device aright.
 Beneath no stronger hand
 Holds he a weak command,
 No throne doth he abase him to adore ;
 Swift as a word, his deed
 Acts out what stands decreed
 In counsels of his heart, for evermore.

Re-enter DANAUS.

DANAUS.

Take heart, my children : the land's heart is kind
 And to full issue has their voting come.

Leader
 CHORUS.

All hail, my sire ; thy word brings utmost joy.
 Say, to what issue is the vote made sure,
 And how prevailed the people's crowding hands ?

DANAUS.

With one assent the Argives spake their will,
 And, hearing, my old heart took youthful cheer.
 The very sky was thrilled when high in air
 The concourse raised right hands and swore their oath :—

*Free shall the maidens sojourn in this land.
 Unharried, undespoiled, by mortal wight :
 No native hand, no hand of foreigner
 Shall drag them hence ; if any man use force—
 Who'er of all our countrymen shall fail
 To come unto their aid, let him go forth,
 Beneath the people's curse, to banishment.*

So did their king persuade them, such the plea
 He spake concerning us, and warnings gave
 That Zeus, the suppliants' lord, in wrath and might,
 Would never in the aftertime make fat
 The city with prosperity : a curse
 Twofold, for strangers and for kinsfolk scorned,
 Should rise against the city, and become
 An unescaped and ravening fang of woe.
 Such things the Argive people heard, and straight,
 Without proclaim of herald, gave assent :
 Yea, in full conclave, the Pelasgian folk
 Heard suasive pleas, and Zeus through them resolved.

CHORUS.

arg / Arouse we now to chant our prayer
 For fair return of service fair
 And Argos' kindly will.
 Zeus, lord of guestright, look upon
 The grace our stranger lips have won.
 In right and truth, as they begun,
 Guide them, with favouring hand, until
 Thou dost their blameless wish fulfil !

Now may the Zeus-born gods on high

Hear us pour forth

A votive prayer for Argos' clan!—

Never may this Pelasgian earth,

Amid the fire-wrack, shrill the dismal cry

On Ares, ravening lord of fight,

Who in ^{alien} ~~accursed~~ harvest mows down man!

For lo, this land had pity on our plight,

And unto us were merciful and leal,

To us, the piteous flock, who at Zeus' altar kneel!

They scornèd not the pleas of maidenhood,

Nor with the young men's will hath their will stood.

They knew right well

Th' unearthly watching fiend invincible,

The foul avenger—let him not draw near!

For he, on roofs ill-starred,

Defiling and polluting, keeps a ghastly ward!

They knew his vengeance, and took holy heed

To us, the sister suppliants, who cry

To Zeus, the lord of purity:

Therefore with altars pure they shall the gods revere.

Thus, through the boughs that shade our lips, fly forth in

air, ~~+~~

Fly forth, O eager prayer:

May never pestilence efface

This city's race,

Nor be the land with corpses strewed,

Nor stained with civic blood;

The stem of youth, unplucked, to manhood come,

Nor Ares rise from Aphrodité's bower,

The lord of death and bane, to waste our youthful flower—

X Long may the old

Crowd to the altars kindled to consume

Gifts rich and manifold—

Offered to win from powers divine

A benison on city and on shrine :

Let all the sacred might adore

Of Zeus most high, the lord

Of guestright and the hospitable board,

Whose immemorial law doth rule Fate's scales aright :

The garner of earth's store

Be full for evermore,

And grace of Artemis make women's travail light ; X

— No devastating curse of fell disease

This city seize ;

— No clamour of the State arouse to war

Ares, from whom afar

Shrinketh the lute, by whom the dances fail—

Ares, the lord of wail.

Swarm far aloof from Argos' citizens

All plague and pestilence,

And may the Archer-God our children spare ! —

X May Zeus with foison and with fruitfulness

The land's each season bless,

And, quickened with Heaven's bounty manifold,

Teem grazing flock and fold.

Beside the altars of Heaven's hallowing

Loud let the minstrels sing,

And from pure lips float forth the harp-led strain in air. X

Speak

sing

Speak

sire
 And let the people's voice, the power
 That sways the State, in danger's hour
 Be wary, wise for all ;
 Nor honour in dishonour hold,
 But—ere the voice of war be bold—
 Let them to stranger peoples grant
 Fair and unbloody covenant—
 Justice and peace withal ;
 And to the Argive powers divine
 The sacrifice of laurelled kine,
 By rite ancestral, pay.
 Among three words of power and awe,
 Stands this, the third, the mighty law—
Your gods, your fathers deified,
Ye shall adore. Let this abide
 For ever and for aye.

DANAUS.

Dear children, well and wisely have ye prayed ;
 I bid you now not shudder, though ye hear
 New and unlooked-for tidings from your sire.
 From this high place beside the suppliants' shrine
 The bark of our pursuers I behold,
 By divers tokens recognized too well.
 Lo, the spread canvas and the hides that screen
 The gunwale ; lo the prow, with painted eyes
 That seem her onward pathway to descry,
 Heeding too well the rudder at the stern
 That rules her, coming for no friendly end.
 And look, the seamen—all too plain their race—

Their dark limbs gleam from out their snow-white garb ;
 Plain too the other barks, a fleet that comes
 All swift to aid the purpose of the first,
 That now, with furled sail and with pulse of oars
 Which smite the wave together, shoots aland.
 But ye, be calm, and, schooled not scared by fear,
 Confront this chance, be mindful of your trust
 In these protecting gods. And I will hence,
 And champions who shall plead your cause aright
 Will bring unto your side. There come perchance
 Heralds or envoys, eager to lay hand
 And drag you captive hence ; yet fear them not ;
 Foiled shall they be. Yet well it were for you,
 (If, ere with aid I come, I tarry long),
 Not by one step this sanctuary to leave.
 Farewell, fear nought : soon shall the hour be born
 When he that scorns the gods shall rue his scorn.

CHORUS.

Ah but I shudder, father !—ah even now,
 Even as I speak, the swift-winged ships draw nigh !
 I shudder, I shiver, I perish with fear :
 Overseas though I fled,
 Yet nought it avails ; my pursuers are near.

DANAUS.

Children, take heart ; they who decreed to aid
 Thy cause will arm for battle, well I ween.

CHORUS.

But desperate is Ægyptus' ravening race,
 With fight unsated ; thou too know'st it well.

In their wrath they o'ertake us ; the prow is deep-dark
Indem die gesperrten Röhren
~~in the~~ which they have sped,
 And dark is the bench and the crew of the bark.

DANAUS.

Yea but a crew as stout they here shall find,
 And arms well steeled beneath a noon-day sun.

CHORUS.

Ah yet, O father, leave us not forlorn !
 Alone, a maid is nought, a strengthless arm.
 With guile they pursue me, with counsel malign,
 And unholy their soul ;
 And as ravens they seize me, unheeding the shrine.

DANAUS.

Fair will befall us, children, in this chance,
 If thus in wrath they wrong the gods and you.

CHORUS.

Alas, nor tridents nor the sanctity
 Of shrines will drive them, O my sire, from us !
 Unholy and daring and cursed is their ire,
 Nor own they control
 Of the gods, but like jackals they glut their desire.

DANAUS.

Ay, but *Come wolf, flee jackal*, saith the saw ;
Nor can the flax-plant overbear the corn.

CHORUS.

Iustful, accursèd, monstrous is their will
As of beasts ravening—'ware we of their power !

DANAUS.

Look you, not swiftly puts a fleet to sea,
Nor swiftly to its moorings ; long it is
Or e'er the saving cables to the shore
Are borne, and long or e'er the steersmen cry,
The good ship swings at anchor—all is well.
Longest of all, the task to come aland
Where haven there is none, when sunset fades
In night. *To pilot wise*, the adage saith,
Night is a day of wakefulness and pain.
Therefore no force of weaponed men, as yet,
Scatheless can come ashore, before the bark
Lie at her anchorage securely moored.
Bethink thee therefore, nor in panic leave
The shrine of gods whose succour thou hast won.
I seek the town—men shall not blame me long,
Old, but with youth at heart and on my tongue.

[*Exit* DANAUS.]

CHORUS.

O land of hill and dale, O holy land,
What shall befall us? whither shall we flee,
From Apian land to some dark lair of earth ?

O would that in vapour of smoke I might rise to the clouds
of the sky,
That as dust which flits up without wings I might pass and
vanish and die !
I dare not, I dare not abide : my heart yearns, eager to fly ;
And dark is the cast of my thought ; I shudder and tremble
for fear.
My father looked forth and beheld : I die of the sight that
draws near.
And for me be the strangling cord, the halter made ready
by fate,
Before to my body draws nigh the man of my horror and
hate.
Nay, ere I will own him as lord, as handmaid to Hades
I go !
And oh that aloft in the sky, where the dark clouds are
frozen to snow,
A refuge for me might be found, or a mountain-top smooth
and too high
For the foot of the goat, where the vulture sits lonely, and
none may descry
The pinnacle veiled in the cloud, the highest and sheerest
of all,
Ere to wedlock that rendeth my heart, and love that is love-
less, I fall !
Yea, a prey to the dogs and the birds of the mount will
I give me to be,—
From wailing and curse and pollution it is death, only death,
sets me free :
Let death come upon me before to the ravisher's bed I am
thrust ;

What champion, what saviour but death can I find, or what
refuge from lust ?

I will utter my shriek of entreaty, a prayer that shrills up to
the sky,

That calleth the gods to compassion, a ~~tuneful~~ ^{prayerful}, a pitiful
cry,

That is loud to invoke the releaser. O father, look down
on the fight ;

Look down in thy wrath on the wronger, with eyes that are
eager for right.

Zeus, thou that art lord of the world, whose kingdom is
strong over all,

Have mercy on us ! At thine altar for refuge and safety we
call.

For the race of Ægyptus is fierce, with lust and with malice
afire ;

They cry as the questing hounds, they sweep with the speed
of desire.

But thine is the balance of fate, thou rulest the wavering
scale,

And without thee no mortal emprise shall have strength to
achieve or prevail.

^{1 scream}
Alack, alack ! the ravisher—

He leaps from boat to beach, he draweth ⁴ near !

Away thou plunderer accurst !

NJS Death seize thee first

~~Or~~ ^{near} e'er thou touch me—off ^{all} God, hear our cry,

^{all} Our maiden agony !

^{the touch} Ah, ah, the touch, the prelude of my shame. Susan

^{Sack} Alas, my maiden fame !



H O sister, sister, to the altar cling,
For he that seizeth me,
Grim is his wrath and stern, by land as on the sea.
All Guard us, O king!

Enter the Herald of ÆGYPTUS.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Hence to my barge—step swiftly, tarry not.

CHORUS.

Alack, he rends—he rends my hair! O wound on wound!
Help! my lopped head will fall, my blood gush o'er the
ground!

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Aboard, ye cursèd—with a new curse, go!

CHORUS.

Would God that on the wand'ring brine
Thou and this braggart tongue of thine
Had sunk beneath the main—
Thy mast and planks, made fast in vain!
Thee would I drive aboard once more,
A slayer and a dastard, from the shore!

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Be still, thou vain demented soul;
My force thy craving shall control.
Away, aboard! What, clingest to the shrine?
Away! this city's gods I hold not for divine.

CHORUS.

Aid me, ye gods, that never, never
 I may again behold
 The mighty, the life-giving river,
 Nilus, the quickener of field and fold !
 Alack, O sire, unto the shrine I cling—
 Shrine of this land from which mine ancient line did spring.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Shrines, shrines, forsooth!—the ship, the ship be shrine.
 Aboard, perforce and will-ye nill-ye, go !
 Or e'er from hands of mine
 Ye suffer torments worse and blow on blow.

CHORUS.

Alack, God grant those hands may strive in vain
 With the salt-streaming wave,
 When 'gainst the wide-blown blasts thy bark shall strain
 To round Sarpedon's cape, the sandbank's treach'rous grave.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Shrill ye and shriek unto what gods ye may,
 Ye shall not leap from out Ægyptus' bark,
 How bitterly soe'er ye wail your woe.

CHORUS.

Alack, alack my wrong !
 Stern is thy voice, thy vaunting loud and strong.
 Thy sire, the mighty Nilus, drive thee hence,
 Turning to death and doom thy lustful violence !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Swift to the vessel of the double prow,
Go quickly ! let none linger, else this hand
Ruthless will hale you by your tresses hence.

CHORUS.

Alack, O father ! from the shrine
Not aid but agony is mine.

As a spider he creeps and he clutches his prey,

And he hales me away.

A spectre of darkness, of darkness. Alas and alas ! well-a-
day !

O Earth, O my mother ! O Zeus, thou king of the earth,
and her child !

Turn back, we pray thee, from us his clamour and threaten-
ings wild !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Peace ! I fear not this country's deities.

They fostered not my childhood nor mine age.

CHORUS.

Like a snake that is human he comes, he shudders and
crawls to my side :

As an adder that biteth the foot, his clutch on my flesh
doth abide.

O Earth, O my mother ! O Zeus, thou king of the earth,
and her child !

Turn back, we pray thee, from us his clamour and threaten-
ings wild !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Swift each unto the ship ; repine no more,
Or my hand shall not spare to rend your robe.

CHORUS.

O chiefs, O leaders, aid me, or I yield !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Peace ! if ye have not ears to hear my words,
Lo, by these tresses must I hale you hence.

CHORUS.

O ruin, O despair ! Bring aid, O king !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Ay, kings enow ye shall behold anon,
Ægyptus' sons—Ye shall not want for kings.

[*Enter the KING OF ARGOS.*

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Sirrah, what dost thou ? how art overbold
Thus daring to insult Pelasgia's realm ?
What, deem'st thou this a woman-hearted town ?
Too full thou art of thy barbarian scorn
For us of Grecian blood. Go to ; dost dare,
Deluded thus, to work these divers wrongs ?

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Say thou wherein my deeds transgress my right.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

First, that thou play'st a stranger's part amiss.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Wherein? I do but search and claim mine own.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

To whom of our guest-champions hast appealed?

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

To Hermes, herald's champion, lord of search.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Unto a god. Yet dost thou wrong the gods.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

The gods that rule by Nilus I revere.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

I take thy word: our Argive gods are nought!

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

The prey is mine, unless force rend it from me.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

At thine own peril touch them—'ware, and soon!

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

I hear thy speech, no hospitable word.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

I am no host for sacrilegious hands.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

This greeting will I to my masters tell.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Tell, an thou wilt—I ponder not thy will.

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Yet, that I have my message clear to say
(For it behoves that heralds' words be clear,
Be they or ill or good), how art thou named ?
By whom despoiled of this sister-band
Of maidens, I pass homeward—speak and say.
For lo, henceforth in Ares' court we stand,
Who judges not by witness but by war :
No pledge of silver now can bring the cause
To issue : ere this thing end, there must be
Corpse piled on corpse and many lives gasped forth.

THE KING OF ARGOS.

What skills it that I tell my name to thee ?
Thou and thy mates shall learn it ere the end.
Know that if words unstained by violence
Can change these maidens' choice, then mayest thou,
With full consent of theirs, conduct them hence.
But thus the city with one voice ordained—

No force shall bear away the maiden band.

Firmly this word upon the temple wall
Is by a rivet clenched, and shall abide :
Not upon wax inscribed and delible,
Nor upon parchment sealed and stored away.—
Lo, thou hast heard our free mouths speak their will :
Out from our presence—tarry not, but go !

HERALD OF ÆGYPTUS.

Have then thy will, that new war come on thee.
Strength and success be on the young men's side !

THE KING OF ARGOS.

Know that here also ye shall find young men,
Unsodden with the juices oozed from corn.*

[*Exit Herald of ÆGYPTUS.*

But ye, O maids, with your attendants true,
Pass hence with trust into the fenced town,
Ringed with a wide confine of guarding towers.
Therein are many dwellings for such guests
As the State honours ; there myself am housed
Within a palace neither scant nor strait.
There dwell ye, if ye will to lodge at ease
In halls well-thronged : yet, if your soul prefer,
Dwell ye secluded in a separate home.
Choose ye and cull, from these our proffered gifts,

* For this curious taunt, strongly illustrative of what Mr. Browning calls "nationality in drinks," see Herodotus, ii. 77. A similar feeling may perhaps be traced in Tacitus' description of the national beverage of the Germans: "Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento, *in quantum similitudinem vini corruptus.*" ("Germania," chap. 23.)

Whiche'er is best and sweetest to your will :
 And I and all these citizens whose vote
 Stands thus decreed, will your protectors be.
 Look not to find elsewhere more loyal guard.

CHORUS.

O godlike chief, God grant my prayer :
Fair blessings on thy proffers fair,
Lord of Pelasgia's race.

Yet, of thy grace, unto our side
 Send thou the man of courage tried,
 Of counsel deep and prudent thought,—
 Be Danaus to his children brought ;
 For his it is to guide us well
 And warn where it behoves to dwell—
 What place shall guard and shelter us
 From malice and tongues slanderous :
 Swift always are the lips of blame
 A stranger-maiden to defame—
 But Fortune give us grace !

THE KING OF ARGOS.

A stainless fame, a welcome kind
 From all this people shall ye find :
 Dwell therefore, damsels, loved of us,
 Within our walls, as Danaus
 Allots to each, in order due,
 Her dower of attendants true.

[*Re-enter* DANAUS.]

DANAUS.

High thanks, my children, unto Argos ^{give} ~~con,~~
 And to this folk, as to Olympian gods,
 Give offerings meet of sacrifice and wine ;
 For saviours are they in good sooth to you.
 From me they heard, and bitter was their wrath,
 How those your kinsmen strove to work you wrong,
 And how of us were thwarted : then to me
 This company of spearmen did they grant,
 That honoured I might walk, nor unaware
 Die by some secret thrust and on this land
 Bring down the curse of death, that dieth not.
 Such boons they gave me : it behoves me pay
 A deeper reverence from a soul sincere.
 Ye, to the many words of wariness
 Spoken by me your father, add this word,
 That, tried by time, our unknown company
 Be held for honest : over-swift are tongues
To slander strangers, over-light is speech
 To bring pollution on a stranger's name.
 Therefore I rede you, bring no shame on me
 Now when man's eye beholds your maiden prime.
 Lovely is beauty's ripening harvest-field,
 But ill to guard ; and men and beasts, I wot,
 And birds and creeping things make prey of it.
 And when the fruit is ripe for love, the voice
 Of Aphrodite bruiteth it abroad,
 The while she guards the yet unripened growth.
 On the fair richness of a maiden's bloom

Each passer looks, o'ercome with strong desire,
 With eyes that waft the wistful dart of love.
 Then be not such our hap, whose livelong toil
 Did make our pinnace plough the mighty main :
 Nor bring we shame upon ourselves, and joy
 Unto my foes. Behold, a twofold home—
 One of the king's and one the people's gift—
 Unbought, 'tis yours to hold,—a gracious boon.
 Go—but remember ye your sire's behest,
 And hold your life less dear than chastity.

Reader
 CHORUS.

The gods above grant that all else be well.
 But fear not thou, O sire, lest aught befall
 Of ill unto our ripened maidenhood.
 So long as Heaven have no new ill devised,
 From its chaste path my spirit shall not swerve.

SEMI-CHORUS.

18
 Pass and adore ye the Blessed, the gods of the city who
 dwell
 Around Erasinus, the gush of the swift immemorial tide.

SEMI-CHORUS.

07
 Chant ye, O maidens; aloud let the praise of Pelasgia
 swell ;
 Hymn we no longer the shores where Nilus to ocean doth
 glide.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Sing we the bounteous streams that ripple and gush through
the city ;
Quickening flow they and fertile, the soft new life of the
plain.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Artemis, maiden most pure, look on us with grace and with
pity—
Save us from forced embraces : such love hath no crown
but a pain.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Yet not in scorn we chant, but in honour of Aphrodite ;
She truly and Hera alone have power with Zeus and
control.
Holy the deeds of her rite, her craft is secret and mighty,
And high is her honour on earth, and subtle her sway of
the soul.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Yea, and her child is Desire, in the train of his mother he
goeth—
Yea, and Persuasion soft-lipped, whom none can deny or
repel :
Cometh Harmonia too, on whom Aphrodite bestoweth,
The whispering parley, the paths of the rapture that
lovers love well.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Ah, but I tremble and quake, lest again they should sail to
reclaim!

Alas for the sorrow to come, the blood and the carnage of
war.

Ah, by whose will was it done, that o'er the wide ocean they
came,

Guided by favouring winds, and wafted by sail and by oar?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Peace! for what Fate hath ordained will surely not tarry
but come;

Wide is the counsel of Zeus, by no man escaped, or
withstood:

Only I pray that whate'er, in the end, of this wedlock, he
doom,

We, as many a maiden of old, may win from the ill to the
good.*

SEMI-CHORUS.

Great Zeus, this wedlock turn from me—
Me from the kinsman bridegroom guard!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Come what come may, 'tis Fate's decree.

* The ambiguity of these two lines is reproduced from the original. The Semi-Chorus appear to pray, in one aspiration, that the threatened wedlock may never take place, and, if it does take place, may be for weal, not woe.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Soft is thy word—the doom is hard.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Thou know'st not what the fates provide.

SEMI-CHORUS.

How should I scan Zeus' mighty will,
The depth of counsel undescried?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Pray thou no word of omen ill.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What timely warning wouldst thou teach?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Beware, nor slight the gods in speech.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Zeus, hold from my body the wedlock detested, the bride-
groom abhorred!

It was thou, it was thou didst release—

Mine ancestress Io from sorrow—thine healing it was that
restored,—

The touch of thine hand gave her peace.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Be thy will for the cause of the maidens } of two ills, ~~for~~ the
~~least one~~ I pray—

The exile that leaveth me pure.

May thy justice have heed to my cause, my prayers to thy
mercy find way!

For the hands of thy saving are sure.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

APPENDIX.





APPENDIX.

THE foregoing translation of a play which, in comparison with the other works of Æschylus, is not very widely known or admired, may appear to require some defence.

Sufficient apology might be found in the fact that, though neglected by ordinary readers of Greek, it has always been among the *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν*—"things vocal to the wise." Critics as competent and as diverse as Mr. Keble, Mr. Browning, and Mr. Swinburne, have each testified to its deep interest. For a thoroughly appreciative estimate of its beauties, the reader may well refer to the seventeenth and twenty-third of Keble's "Prælectiones." Not even the cumbrous necessity that was imposed upon him, of lecturing on Greek poetry, to an English audience, in the Latin language, was able to obscure his sympathetic interpretation of this play. There is a peculiar religious simplicity in it which may well have commended it to the author of the "Christian Year." However this may be, "dulcissimæ illæ 'Ἰκετίδες" (Præl. p. 294), seem to have attracted no small part of his critical affection. Mr. Browning's compliment to the imaginary curer of "the halt and maimed Iketides" ("Christmas Eve," st. 18); is well known: Mr. Swinburne speaks of it ("Essays and Studies," p. 198), as "a glorious and hapless poem, whose godlike grace and heroic beauty so many readers have more or less passed over with half a recognition, for no fault but its misfortune"—both, if I may venture to say so, exaggerating the extent of the corruptions and difficulties; which, considerable though they are, cannot be accounted sufficient to prevent any competent reader of Greek from enjoying this drama from the first to the last line. So far as I can judge, it is, in a literary sense, distinctly easier than the "Choephoroi," though it suggests archæological problems of greater weight, perhaps, than any arising out of the latter play.

There is, however, a reason, stronger even than the admiration of

experts, for regarding the "Suppliant Maidens" with special interest. It is in all probability *the earliest extant specimen of the drama*. We see in it not only the dawn of the poetic genius of Æschylus, but of the drama of Greece, as distinct from mere Dionysiac choruses: the dawn of that species of poetry which, from its power of impressing a crowd no less than a solitary reader, has never, since the days of Æschylus, ceased to be the most potent instrument of ideas.

In speaking thus, however, we must not ignore the divergence between Boeckh, Müller, and others, on the one hand, and Hermann, Paley, etc., on the other, with respect to the date of this drama. The former set of critics find, in certain passages, allusion to the events of the year 461 B.C.; in which case the "Suppliant Maidens" dates as the middle, not the first, of Æschylus' surviving plays, being preceded by the "Prometheus," the "Persians," and the "Seven against Thebes," and followed by the "Agamemnon," "Choephoroi," and "Eumenides."

Hermann and Paley, however, regard it as a youthful work, anterior to the other six plays (see M. Haupt's Preface to Hermann's *Æsch.*, vol. I. p. 3; Paley, *Æsch.*, p. 2; etc.) In such a conflict of the learned, any one who has been compelled to form *some* opinion may be allowed to express it, provided he does so without confidence.

After scrutinizing the supposed allusions to the events of 461 B.C., I own myself unable to see in them more than a vague *applicability* to those events. They indicate rather the prescience of a poet and political thinker, than the experiences of a contemporary writer.

On the other hand, the internal evidence for the juvenility of this drama appears to me most cogent. We see the tendency to grandiose language, not yet fully developed as in the "Prometheus" and the "Seven against Thebes:" we see the dialogue just taking its place beside the chorus as equal, not yet as superior: we see the tendency of youth to simplicity, and even platitude, in religious and moral speculation; and yet we recognize (ll. 590-600), as in the germ, the profound theology of the "Agamemnon," and (ll. 697-709) the political vein of the "Eumenides." A gulf seems fixed between the "Suppliant Maidens" and the Trilogy, which can only be spanned by the supposition of a considerable interval of time. The opposite view has that difficulty, that element of the surprising, which we should feel if told that the "Merchant of Venice" belonged to the same period of Shakespeare's development as "Hamlet." There is little drawing of character in the "Suppliant Maidens;" nothing comparable to the "Prometheus" in force; nothing of the epical magnificence of the

description of Salamis in the "Persæ," only the grave paternal care of Danaus, the cautious kindness of the Pelasgian chieftain-king; and, over all, the long lyrical cry of the maidens, which—

"Comes tender as a hurt bird's note,"

to be saved from imminent danger and intolerable wrong. At the risk of seeming fanciful, I should say that, to the ordinary reader, a good preparation for appreciating this drama would be a perusal of the "Heart of Midlothian." There is a like piteous isolation, a like high resolve, a like pathetic admixture of a partially foreign dialect.

In thus adhering, however, to the view of Hermann and Paley, I am conscious of having proceeded almost entirely on literary grounds; and I know well how precarious such a judgment is. Yet it seemed best to express it, that the reader of the translation may at least know with what view of the drama it was written.

Another question obtrudes itself, on which I can hardly hope to throw light: it may be well, however, to try and make darkness visible.

In the argument prefixed to the translation, the story of the daughters of Danaus has been told, so far as is necessary to the comprehension of the play. But, even apart from the Greek usage of presenting trilogies and not single plays, this drama conspicuously needs a sequel, if not a predecessor. In later times the story was completed in full horror. Danaus reluctantly resigns his daughters to their Egyptian suitors; but, in mistrust and hatred of the bridegrooms, counsels the brides to slay them secretly during the bridal night. All except one, Hypermnestra, commit this crime, and are doomed, in requital, to an eternal labour—that of filling with water a bottomless vessel—in Tartarus.

Of this sequel, the first part—the murder of the husbands—is described in the "Prometheus" (ll. 855–868) and mentioned elsewhere in Greek tragedy; as, for instance in Euripides' "Phœnissæ" (l. 1675), where Antigone, threatened with compulsory espousal to Hæmon, replies with bitter emphasis—

νὸξ ἄρ' ἐκέλευη Δαναΐδων μ' ἕξει μίαν.

The murder, and the doom of the murderesses in Tartarus, form the subject of one of the finest of Horace's Sapphic Odes (bk. 3, od. xi.). Are we to infer from this that such was the sequel of the trilogy of which the "Suppliant Maidens" must have been the first or second play?

The answer to this question cannot be given with certainty. Mr.

Keble (Præl. 23, p. 451, 462-464) seems to have answered it with a simple affirmative. To him the "Suppliant Maidens" was the first play of a trilogy, answering to the "Agamemnon"—the second, answering to the "Choephoroi," narrated the murder of the bridegrooms—the third, answering to the "Eumenides," described the penalties which, on earth and in hell, were inflicted on Danaus and his daughters. An Æschylean simplicity and solemnity, he considered, pervaded such a dramatic conception.

I doubt, however, if such a theory be tenable. No allusion, I believe, is made by Homer to any penalty befalling the maidens, in the infernal regions. Æschylus' contemporary, Pindar (Pyth. 9, 112; see also Nem. x. 1-10), describes their remarriage. The Tartarean part of the legend, in fact, is of later date. It may well be questioned whether the presentation of an actual Tartarus and its penalties would have been possible to early tragedy—though we know that Æschylus was reckoned daring in such matters, and that to the comedy of Aristophanes such licence was possible. Müller, on the other hand, is positive (Diss. Eum. sect. 100, transl. Camb. 1835) that the "Suppliant Maidens" forms a *middle* play. With this view Paley concurs, holding that the play was preceded by one of unknown argument, called "Ægyptii," and succeeded by a "Danaides," in which the murder of the bridegrooms, and the *acquittal* of the brides, must have been narrated.

Lastly, Hermann considers the "Suppliant Maidens" to have been the first play of the trilogy, and to have been followed by an "Ægyptii," or "Ægyptiadæ," or possibly "Thalamopoioi," which described the submission of Danaus in Argos to an Egyptian army, his consent to his daughters' wedlock, and the murder of the bridegrooms: and then by the "Danaides," in which judgment is passed upon the heroines who obeyed their sire and slew their husbands, and on Hypermnestra who, in disobedience, was merciful.

This view he enforces by the reflection that no allusion is found in the "Suppliant Maidens" to any preceding play such as Müller imagines. And undoubtedly it is hard to conceive that the surrender of Danaus to an Egyptian army, his consent to the marriage, the murder, the trial and acquittal, could all have been comprised in one final drama.

The reader will have already perceived that we are moving in a wilderness of guess-work, where ingenuity and vague inferences take the place of learning and demonstration. Such guidance through the twilight as we have, is supplied by the fragments of non-extant dramas.

(Poet. Scen. Dind. ed. v. *Αἰσχ. Ἀποσ.*, fr. 40-42, 72. Hermann, *Æsch.*, vol. v. i. pp. 313, 320, 329-334). From these we learn with certainty that a play of Æschylus called "Danaides" existed. An interesting fragment of this play, part of a speech by Aphroditè, has been preserved by Athenæus (xiii. p. 600 A.). Its resemblance to passages of Lucretius is striking, and suggests a common origin. Unfortunately, there is too little of it to enable us to judge whether Aphrodite is speaking to persuade the maidens to marriage, to arraign them for the murder of their lords, or to exculpate Hypermnestra for yielding to love and pity, as against her father's command. All that can be said with certainty is, that Aphrodite is urging her power and universal prerogative.

Very faint traces (Herm. fr. 5) remain of a play called "Ægyptii," or perhaps "Ægyptiadæ;" a fainter trace still (fr. 70) of one called "Thalamopoiói" = "The preparers of the chamber." The latter, Hermann, with laborious ingenuity, strives to identify, partly from its title, as the *middle* play of this trilogy.

Learned scholars may well be able to draw, from these fragments and other collateral sources, more certain knowledge, with respect to the two lost plays of the trilogy, than any which is at present accessible to me. I venture, however, not without misgiving, on some general reflections which may throw a faint light on the problem.

The wanderings of Io, the Argive ancestress of the suppliant maidens, are fully told or foretold in the "Prometheus;" they are recounted also in the second chorus (ll. 524-599) of the present play. The intermediate ancestry is also recorded (ll. 310-321): the cause and circumstances of the maidens' flight are also fully explained in the introductory chant. It is difficult, so far as the legend is known to us, to imagine a subject-matter, at once fresh and adequate, for a drama preceding the "Suppliant Maidens." It is, perhaps, harder still, as I have said above, to fancy a *single* subsequent play containing all the sequel of the story, from the granting of protection by the King of Argos to the acquittal of the heroines after their husbands' murder. The close packing of such a drama would render it curiously unlike any surviving play of Æschylus.

On these grounds, and from a general impression, which it would be useless to attempt to define, that the "Suppliant Maidens" reads like the *commencement* of a dramatic story, I incline to accept Hermann's view, that the trilogy began with the "Suppliant Maidens," and closed with the "Danaides." What the middle play was called, whether "Ægyptii," "Ægyptiadæ," or "Thalamopoiói," I cannot, even con-

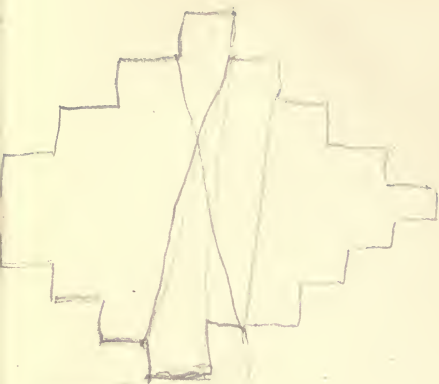
jecturally and for myself, decide. If this were so, of what nature was the dramatic solution? How was the undoubted guilt of the heroines, in murdering their lords, balanced against the cruel and impious compulsion whereby they had been forced into a detested wedlock—a wedlock from which their own father bade them escape by murder?

Whatever guess be made as to this, I think that students of *Æschylus'* great surviving trilogy will admit that this situation has considerable analogy to that of Orestes, stained with the blood of a mother knowingly slain, yet directed to the deed by a god, protected by him while pursued by the Furies, and finally acquitted by the intervention of Athena and by the forms of human justice.

It is in this region of guilt un denied, yet justified,—of a contest and final reconciliation between co-equal duties—that the mind of *Æschylus* moved. It was so, apparently, in his *Promethean* trilogy; it is so in his trilogy of the “House of Atreus;” it may well have been so in his trilogy of the “Daughters of Danaus.”

In the final choric strains of the “Suppliant Maidens” (ll. 1034–1051), the way is paved for some intervention or special appearance of Aphrodite: the surviving fragment of the “Danaides” is, as has been said above, part of an authoritative speech by her. The tone of reverence in which the heroines speak of her may possibly foreshadow her eventual appearance to protect them as wronged by a loveless marriage. Or again, Aphrodite may impeach them for their crime, and plead for *Hypermnestra* only; and some indirect intervention of Zeus, mindful of the wrongs of *Io*, may set free her female descendants. But I am disinclined to venture further on the path of conjecture, and will formulate briefly a general view, which no one, I trust, will mistake for a confident dogma.

The “Suppliant Maidens” is the first play of a trilogy. The second play, whatever was its title, related the surrender of the maidens, their marriage, and the murder of their husbands. The third, called “Danaides,” represented their arraignment and acquittal: perhaps, also (see *Prom.* ll. 774, 869), some special honour paid to *Hypermnestra*; the descendants of whom and *Lynceus*, the husband whom she loved and spared, ruled in *Argos* for many generations.





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